Using Common Space Policy

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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that common space in TCH communities is used to build healthy communities. To do this, the policy
- clarifies the process for booking or renting common space,
- outlines what the OU Tenant Community Fund is, and
- outlines the process OU Tenant Councils should follow to decide how to use the money earned by renting common space.

Scope

This policy applies to all common space in Toronto Community Housing’s communities. It outlines a clear and fair process for individuals and groups booking common space for short term or long term use, including rental fees and damage deposits where applicable.

This policy applies to anyone who wants to book common space, including tenants, tenant groups, TCH staff, members of the community or neighbourhood, political representatives, community agencies and organizations. TCH communities often include several tenant groups, including tenant associations, social clubs, interest groups, cultural groups and others. Tenants and tenant groups can book space in any TCH community, not just their own building.

This policy applies to common space in communities managed by TCH, and to communities run by property management services.

This policy also covers the Tenant Community Fund for each OU. OU Tenant Councils can use the money from renting common space to support tenant activities and initiatives in their communities.

This policy does not cover requests for
- exclusive use of space
- renovations, or
- taking housing units out of circulation.
These requests must be negotiated with the OU manager and OU Tenant Council.

If Tenant Councils or communities seek to generate new sources of revenue using TCH assets and/or increasing costs to TCH (such as utility costs), permission must be granted by TCH.
Definitions

**Common space** includes recreation rooms, craft rooms, meeting rooms, gymnasiums and outside grounds. It does not include swimming pools, commercial space or housing units.

**Short Term Use** includes using space once, occasionally or for a short time. For example, hosting a birthday party; having a group meeting four times a year; or using a room for a few days to prepare for a building’s craft sale.

**Long Term Use** includes using space for part of the week, for up to a year. For example, one afternoon a week over six months.

**Exclusive Use** means that only one group can use the space, or that the space is only used for one thing. For example, a community agency running programs from an office that used to be a meeting room.

Principles

This policy will be guided by the following principles:

- Space in TCH communities can only be used for activities which adhere to the Ontario Human Rights Code and do not break any laws.

- Access to common space will be fair and equitable.

- All individuals and groups must follow the same process to reserve or rent space.

- Requests will be considered on a first-come-first-served basis, but will be flexible to accommodate unforeseen or changing needs. For example, a regular Tuesday night euchre may be rescheduled to allow for a culturally significant celebration.

- Events that generate rental income will not receive any particular priority.

Responsibilities

Each OU is responsible for implementing this policy in their community.

They are also responsible for reviewing exclusive use arrangements to ensure that they continue to meet community needs, on an annual basis.

The OU manager is responsible for maintaining common space and equipment (such as tables & chairs) and for making sure all common space meets TCH standards.
Inventory

Each OU will do an inventory of common space in their community. The inventory should include:
- A list of what rooms can be booked and rented
- Details about each room, including size and capacity
- Information about how the space is currently being used
- Details about whether the room, washrooms and building are wheelchair accessible
- Details about other areas that can be used as common space

If OUs do not know the capacity of some rooms, they should contact TCH Life Safety. Staff from Life Safety will visit the room to assess the Fire Code capacity.

OUs will share this information with TCH staff and the other OUs. TCH will post this information on the TCH website.

Needs Assessment

Each OU will review how all common space is currently being used. OU staff and Tenant Councils, in consultation with tenant communities will:
- consider how each long-term rental will affect or benefit tenants, the neighbourhood and the community
- review all long-term use contracts once a year.
- invite community resources/agencies to use common space for programs that meet identified needs and priorities in tenant communities.

Administration

Common space will be managed and administered by each OU. OU Tenant Council and staff will:
- organize information meetings about this policy in each tenant community
- review the fees/damage deposit structure and procedures in this policy and adapt them for their OU. For example, they may want to structure fees according to the size of the room and the length of the rental.
- ensure that the OU Tenant Council processes applications for the Tenant Community Fund, including follow up for receipts/documentation as needed.
Designated OU Staff will:

- make sure that the information is translated into languages appropriate for the local community
- post information in each building about how to book space and how to apply to the Tenant Community Fund
- post calendars in each building which include all room bookings
- process applications to rent space. This includes handing out applications, checking that applicants have all the permits they need, coordinating room inspections and keys, collecting deposits and payments, approving applications and staff follow-up after each event.
- deposit money from common space rentals in the Tenant Community Fund.
Forms and Procedures

How to Book Space

Fee Guidelines

Application to Rent Common Space (including terms of agreement)
How to Book Space

You must book space two weeks before your event to allow enough time for processing. This means that you must give TCH your application form and applicable fees/damage deposit 14 days before the event. If the event is urgent or unforeseen, exceptions can be made.

Step 1 Find out if the space is available. Check the calendar posted in the building and talk to TCH staff.

Step 2 If the room is available when you want it, ask the TCH staff for an Application to Use Common Space. The staff will tell you how much the room will cost (if fees apply), what is included, and whether you will have to pay a damage deposit and security costs. If the room is not available, staff may be able to suggest an alternative.

Step 3 Fill in the Application to Use Common Space. Read the Terms of Agreement. Make sure you sign both forms.

Step 4 Make sure you have liability insurance. Tenant groups are insured through TCH. If you are not a tenant group, you must buy liability insurance from TCH or an insurance company. TCH will not refund insurance fees if you cancel your event.

Step 5 Fill in the Insurance form or provide proof of Insurance.

Step 6 If you will be serving or selling alcohol, buy Host Liquor Liability Insurance. You must also get a Smart Serve Certificate.

Step 7 Return your Application and Insurance forms to the staff, along with all payments. Each payment (room rental fee, damage deposit and insurance) must be a separate certified cheque or money order.

Step 8 TCH staff will review the application and make a decision. They will let you know if your application is approved. The room is not booked until the staff tells you the application has been approved.

Step 9 Meet with the staff to:
  • inspect the room. Look at the room and note any damage or problems
  • go over the Terms of Agreement
  • find out how to clean up the room, including what cleaning supplies you can use.
  • find out how to access the space. If keys are issued, staff will tell you where to return them after the event.

Step 10 After the event, the staff will inspect the room. If there is damage, you will pay for repairs, cleanup or other costs. If these costs are more than the damage deposit, TCH will charge you for the extra cost.
### Fee Guidelines

*These fees are only a guide. Each OU or building may adapt these fees, if the Tenant Council and staff agree to the changes.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Kind of Event?</th>
<th>Fee</th>
<th>Damage Deposit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open to all tenants (people who are not tenants may attend)</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TCH Business</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant Council/Tenant Group Executive meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Private Tenant Use</strong> (not open to all tenants)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• children’s events (must finish by 6:00 p.m.)</td>
<td>$25</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• adult events (must finish by 11:00 p.m.)</td>
<td>$75</td>
<td>$75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• weddings or receptions (must finish by 11:00 p.m.)</td>
<td>$300</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Private event for people who are not tenants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• children’s events (must finish by 6:00 p.m.)</td>
<td>$50</td>
<td>$75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• adult events (must finish by 11:00 p.m.)</td>
<td>$150</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-profit, religious or political groups</strong></td>
<td>discretionary</td>
<td>discretionary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>For-profit groups</strong> (eg. filming movies, selling clothing, equipment)</td>
<td>negotiable</td>
<td>negotiable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fundraising for personal profit</strong> (eg. selling crafts, Tupperware, garage sales)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Application to Use Common Space

Who is in charge of the event? 

Name of Building 

Tenant/Group Name 

Your address 

Phone number Where else can staff call you? 

E-mail: 

Where do you want to hold the event? 

Which space would you like to use? 

What date is your event? 

What time will the event start? When will it end? 

Describe event 

How many people will be at the event? 

Who can attend? (Please check one)  
☐ All tenants  ☐ Only some tenants  ☐ Only people who are invited  ☐ Open to tenant and community  

Will you be serving liquor? ☐ Yes ☐ No  Will you be selling liquor? ☐ Yes ☐ No  

Do you charge people money for this event? For example, admission, membership fees, donations.  ☐ Yes ☐ No  

Are you selling anything  ☐ Yes ☐ No  

If you are booking the space for a group, what kind of group is it? Check as many as apply.  
☐ Tenant  ☐ Non-Profit  ☐ For Profit  ☐ Religious  ☐ Political  

Does your group get financial grants? ☐ Yes ☐ No  

Who gives grants to your group? 

TCH Common Space Policy 9 of 18 Updated July 2010
What is the group’s **purpose**? __________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

I have read the Terms of Agreement. I agree to follow TCH rules. I know that if I break any of the rules, this contract will be cancelled.

Authorized TCH staff ____________________ Person in charge of the event ____________________ Date __________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Staff use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was the application approved?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the applicant have insurance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ They are covered by TCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ I have seen the proof of insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Fees and Application sent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the applicant pay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Fee to rent the space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Damage Deposit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the damage deposit returned to the renter?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date returned ________________ Initial __________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Terms of Agreement

In this document, “I” means the person renting space and “you” means the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCH).

I understand that renting the room is based on the following conditions.

☐ My event must be finished by 11 PM, because this space is in a building where people live.

Booking
☐ Space bookings are on a first-come, first-served basis.
☐ My booking is not final until it has been approved by TCH staff.

Insurance
☐ I must show proof that I have bought liability insurance.
☐ At any time, you can ask to see a copy of my Application and proof that I have insurance.
☐ If I am serving alcohol at the event, I must get Host Liquor Liability Insurance coverage and a Smart Serve Certificate.

Payment
☐ Fees (where applicable) may include a room rental charge and a damage deposit. You may also ask me to pay security costs.
☐ I must give you separate payments for each charge (fees, damage deposit and security costs). I can only pay with certified cheques or money orders.
☐ You may keep my damage deposit if you need to pay for repairs, emergency staffing, cleanup or any other costs. If these costs are more than the damage deposit, you will charge me for the extra cost.

Using the Space
☐ I must arrange with staff how I will access the space. This must be done before the event, during staff business hours.
☐ If I receive keys, I must return them after my event.
☐ I am responsible for setting up the room.
☐ Equipment is not included in the rental, unless I have made a special arrangement.
☐ Parking is not included with the rental of the facilities, and anyone who parks on the property may be tagged and towed.
☐ I must make sure that when we leave the room looks like it did when we arrived. This means that the furniture is arranged as it was, the room is clean and I have disposed of all waste or garbage as arranged with staff.

The Law
☐ This event will not break any laws, including local by-laws about smoking and noise. This event will not violate the Ontario Human Rights Code.
☐ You have the right to cancel my rental agreement at any time. You can take me to court or evict me if I break the Tenant Protection Act of 1998.
☐ I must be able to show you that I have all the licenses or permits I need for this kind of event. For example, I must show my liquor license, gaming license or professional license.
☐ I will make sure that the number of people at my event is allowed by the Fire Code.

…continued on page 2
☐ I am responsible for the space I rent. I am also responsible for the actions of people at my event.

☐ If I do not follow these terms, I may not be able to rent space from you again.

_____________________________                     ______________________________
Signature of authorized staff                     Signature of person in charge of the event
Toronto Community Housing Corporation

_________________________
Date
The OU Tenant Community Fund

About the OU Tenant Community Fund
Request Form
Approval Form
About the OU Tenant Community Fund

The OU Tenant Community Fund is money from rental of common space in all building in the OU. It can be used to support initiatives and activities that help build healthy communities. Tenant groups can apply. The OU Tenant Council in each community decides which requests will get money.

Here are some examples of things that could get money:
- equipment or material to support and invest in tenant activities or programs, recognizing the cultural diversity of the tenants
- training and development for tenants and tenant groups. For example, learning how to deal with conflict, how to raise money, how to do advocacy, how to bring people together, how to cook, and how to do First Aid or CPR.
- equipment and supplies to support programs in buildings, such as dining together and peer support groups.

How to Apply for OU Tenant Community Funds

Step 1  Fill in the Request Form. Make sure you include all of the information it asks for. If you do not include everything, it could take longer to make a decision about your request.
Step 2  Attach copies of anything that will support your request. For example, copies of invoices or estimates.
Step 3  Make a copy of your request. Keep the copy.
Step 4  Hand in your Request Form. You can give it to your Tenant Representative, building staff, or your COU office.

What will happen to my request?

Your OU Tenant Council will review your request. They will write to tell you their decision.
If the OU Tenant Council does not approve your request, you can appeal. Write to them and say why they should look at your request again. Give your letter to your OU Tenant Council.

Want more information?

Contact your Tenant Representative or Community Services Coordinator/Community Health Promoter.
Request Form

OU Tenant Community Fund – OU #___

Please print

Group’s name: ................................................................. Date: ...........

Address: ..............................................................................

Mailing Address: ..............................................................

Contact person: ......................................................... Phone: .................

E-mail address: ............................................................ Fax: .................

How do you plan to use these funds?

How will your project benefit tenants?

Does your group get funding or support from any other place? Tell us who and how often.

________________________________________________________________________

Are any other tenant or community groups involved in your activity? Which groups?

________________________________________________________________________

How much will your project cost? Please give us a budget.

How much do you want from the Fund? ______________________________

When do you need the money? ______________________________
How would you like to receive the money?
Choose one  ☐ Please pay the supplier
☐ Please pay the Group
☐ Please pay another person. Their name is ______________________
Their address is
________________________________________________________________________

How and when will you tell us what you did with the money?
________________________________________________________________________

Your group will be responsible to spend the money on what you asked for.
Person authorized to sign for your group.

Name: ........................................... Phone #..............................

Signature:........................................... Date ..............................
Approval Form
OU Tenant Community Fund – OU #___

Group’s name:……………………………………………………………..Date:………

Address:………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Mailing Address:……………………………………………………………………………………………

Contact person:……………………………………………………Phine:………………

E-mail address: ……………………………………………Fax:………………

Part 1 OU Council
Date Request was received:……………… Date it was reviewed:………………

Decision  ☐ Approved  ☐ Not Approved

Reasons ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Amount Approved $……….. How to pay:☐ Supplier
☐ Tenant group
☐ Individual – Name________________

Their address is

……………………………………………………………………………………………………...

Do we need proof that the money was spent?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No

Expected Date: ___________ Date we got the proof: ___________ Initial_________

Council Signature………………………… Date:…………………………

Part 2 – Approval by Manager

______________ __________________________
Date Community Housing Manager

We gave copies of this form to  ☐ the requesting group  ☐ OU Council  ☐ Accounting
OU Checklist for Implementing this Policy

OU STAFF AND TENANT COUNCIL HAVE:

☐ read the new policy, “Use of Common Space”, discussed the consultation questions and given our feedback to the Tenant & Community Services Unit.

☐ reviewed the fees, forms and procedures and made the changes that will make it work in our OU.

☐ held information meetings in each tenant community to tell tenants about the policy.

☐ done an inventory of all common space in our community. During the inventory, when we did not know how many people the Fire Code allowed, we asked TCH Life Safety staff to tell us.

☐ filled in the TCH space inventory forms and sent them to the Communications Unit for posting on the intranet.

☐ decided which staff person(s) is responsible for administering room rentals in each location.

☐ created a calendar to show room bookings. It is posted in each building. Each time it changes, our staff changes the calendar.